

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for obscuring ambient noise, comprising:

a background sound generator;

a mixer coupled to said background sound generator; and

a user interface, coupled to said mixer, that, upon a user command, causes said mixer to mix an output of said background sound generator with a transmitted signal, said output selected from music, white noise, colored noise, out-of-phase ambient noise, or simulated alternative ambient noise.

2. (Original) The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said background sound generator synthesizes said output.

3. (Original) The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said background sound generator reproduces said output from stored background sound data.

4. (Original) The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said background sound generator reproduces said output from a data stream received in real time.

5. (Original) The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said output is selectable via said user interface.

Claim 6 (Canceled)

7. (Original) The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said system is associated with a selected one of:

a wireless handset, and

a wireline handset.

8. (Original) A handset comprising the system as recited in Claim 1.

9. (Original) The handset as recited in Claim 8 wherein said handset is selected from the group consisting of:

a wireless handset, and

a wireline handset.

10. (Original) Central office equipment comprising the system as recited in Claim 1.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of obscuring ambient noise, comprising:

generating a background sound that is music, white noise, colored noise, out-of-phase ambient noise, or simulated alternative ambient noise; and

responding to a user command by mixing said background sound with a transmitted signal.

12. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein said generating comprises synthesizing said background sound.

13. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein said generating comprises reproducing said background sound from stored background sound data.

14. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein said generating comprises reproducing said background sound from a data stream received in real time.

15. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein said output is selectable via said user interface.

Claim 16 (Canceled)

17. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein said method is carried out in a selected one of:

- a wireless handset,
- a wireline handset, and
- a central office.